

New Light on the Original Bear Flag

By JOHN ADAM HUSSEY

FOREWORD — It is safe to say that no topic in California history has engendered so much controversy as has the Bear Flag Revolt. Even while the events were taking place during June and July 1846, people started quarreling about it: who was back of the movement, they wanted to know; were the participants American patriots or were they merely robbers and thieves? After more than a hundred years, people are still asking these questions.

Unfortunately for those who tried, later, to get at the truth, most of the contemporary writers on the subject had an ax to grind. Some of them set out to show that the captors of Sonoma were entitled to the undying gratitude of future generations; others, that the men of the Bear Flag, or the persons who suffered losses through their activities, were, or were not, entitled to compensation from the United States. And it was not long before the story of the revolt began to be clouded by politics. Such episodes as the Frémont-Kearny feud and the presidential campaign of 1856 produced a good deal of testimony regarding the Bear Flag movement, very little of which can be described as unprejudiced.

Then there were accounts written by persons who claimed that they, themselves, or certain friends or relatives, deserved chief credit for the movement or for some episode in it. And there were those who, while not always claiming credit for themselves, were doggedly determined that honor should not go to their enemies. Charge and counter-charge constitute a considerable bulk of the source material relating to the Bear Flag Revolt.

As the years went by, the effect of fading memory became greater, and accounts by participants became more and more divergent. And even after the last eyewitness had passed from this earth, so-called "authentic" accounts continued to pour forth, based on family tradition or the recollections of stories told by pioneers. Needless to say, scarcely any two of these narratives were in agreement.

The task of historians who attempted to distill the truth from the great mass of these conflicting source materials was made more difficult because many collections of public and private papers were long unavailable to them. They found it virtually impossible to discover which of the early accounts were reliable, which were false. "It is fearfully hard to tell the truth in these things," complained the eminent philosopher and historian, Josiah Royce, of Harvard, while working on this problem. "If California history were only philosophy!"¹

As a result of this situation, few serious secondary historical studies of the settler revolt of 1846 agree as to details, and some of them are far apart on basic issues. The lack of agreement, disturbing to many historians, has been utterly baffling to general readers of California history. One student of the subject has summed up his experience as follows: "Faithfully have I perused the pages of four accepted authoritative historians and find it nothing less than perplexing to endeavor to reconcile their various contentions of supposed facts."²

Because of the discouragements faced by historians treating this topic, it is not too surprising to find, after three-quarters of a century, that the most useful history of the Bear Flag Revolt is still to be found in the fifth volume (published in 1886) of Hubert Howe Bancroft's monumental *History of California*. This is true despite the fact that, during the past three decades particularly, source materials such as the papers of John D. Sloat, Archibald H. Gillespie, William A. Leidesdorff, and Edward M. Kern — papers which throw light upon a host of hitherto obscure details — have been opened to the scrutiny of scholars.

The reason for the failure of historians to produce a really satisfactory account of the episode at Sonoma appears to boil down to the fact that, even with the wealth of source material now at hand, it has been impossible to bring forth conclusive answers to two fundamental questions: (1) what led John Charles Frémont to intervene in the smoldering dispute between the Mexican authorities and the foreign settlers in California, and to what extent was he responsible for the revolt? (2) what were the exact circumstances surrounding the making of the original Bear Flag — who made it, when was it made, of what was it made, and what did it look like? Until provable, and not merely plausible, answers to these questions can be produced, any attempt to write a definitive history of the Bear Flag Revolt can only be an elaborate form of guessing game.

In very recent years considerable progress has been made toward answering the first of these questions. While all points have not been demonstrated beyond dispute, the general pattern of Frémont's intervention in the settler movement, and the forces which motivated him, are becoming increasingly clear.³

It now appears that the second question, that having to do with the Bear Flag itself, is also about to be answered. A manuscript containing a contemporary drawing of the flag, and throwing light upon several matters which have been in debate for a century, has recently come to light and is soon to be published.⁴ As a further contribution to the solution of this problem, a series of documents is presented below. Most of them are here printed for the first time.

A careful reading of these letters will show that they clarify a number of disputed points in regard to the Bear Flag — the materials of which it was

made, the date upon which it was raised, and other matters. In the opinion of the present writer, however, these documents are primarily valuable because they contain information which permits the movements of the original Bear Flag to be traced, almost from the day it was hauled down from the staff in Sonoma until it was placed in the halls of the Society of California Pioneers in 1855. They demonstrate, beyond reasonable doubt, that the flag which was displayed by the Pioneers as the "original" Bear Flag until it was destroyed in the conflagration of 1906, and which served as the general model for the present State flag, was indeed the standard which flew over the Sonoma plaza during the Bear Flag Revolt.

That the identity of this flag was ever in doubt is eloquent testimony to the fact that a mistaken assertion or a falsehood, if stated often enough and loudly enough, will be believed by at least some people.

RESUMÉ OF EVENTS

On the evening of July 8, 1846, Commander John B. Montgomery, captain of the U. S. S. *Portsmouth*, which was then anchored off Yerba Buena, received word that hostilities had broken out between the United States and Mexico, and that Commodore John D. Sloat had raised the American flag at Monterey. Montgomery was instructed to take possession of the country about the Bay of San Francisco.

Early the next morning, the commander dispatched Lieut. Joseph W. Revere in the ship's fourth cutter to Sonoma, at that time in the possession of a group of settlers — mostly Americans, who a month earlier had rebelled against the Mexican authorities and established the self-styled "Republic of California." When Revere reached his destination, he found the symbol of the settler revolt, the Bear Flag, flying from a staff on the town plaza. Assembling the garrison and the local populace, he informed them of the changed status of international affairs and had the rebel banner lowered. In its place he hoisted the flag of the United States. Shortly after the Bear Flag came down, it was given as a souvenir to Commander Montgomery's son, John Elliott Montgomery, a lad of sixteen, who served as captain's clerk aboard the *Portsmouth*.⁵

The boy did not long enjoy possession of the precious relic. On the afternoon of November 13, 1846, he set out in the launch of the U. S. S. *Warren* for the Sacramento River. The boat was commanded by his elder brother, Acting-Master William Henry Montgomery, and carried, in addition to its crew, the sum of \$846 with which to pay the garrison at Sutter's Fort. Neither boat nor crew was ever heard of again. The presumption was that the craft was upset and the men drowned, but there were many persons who believed that the crew mutinied, murdered the officers, and made off with the payroll. For years afterwards there were occasional rumors that members of the crew had been seen alive in various parts of the United States, but no solution to the mystery has ever been proved.⁶

With the disappearance of young John Montgomery, the Bear Flag passed into the possession of his father, who brought it back to the United States with him in 1848 and deposited it with other relics of the conquest of California in the Boston Navy Yard. As is recounted in the letters printed below, the flag eventually found its way to the Navy Department in Washington. In 1855 it was presented to the Society of California Pioneers and was returned to San Francisco.

Very shortly after receiving the flag, the Pioneers carried it in the 1855 Admission Day parade in San Francisco. As shown by newspaper accounts of the event, the true history and proper significance of the flag appear to have been generally understood at that time.⁷ If this impression is correct, it was the last occasion for many years upon which any such unanimity of opinion can be recorded. Soon thereafter voices began to be raised in protest; this or that *other* banner was the real one.

In an attempt to settle the matter, John S. Hittell, historian of the Society of California Pioneers, made a study of the sources available to him and came forth with the decision that a flag, owned by the Society and showing the bear standing nearly upright, was the original standard.⁸ When published in the newspapers early in 1878, this pronouncement only served to arouse a new storm of controversy. In self-defense the Pioneers were forced to look into the matter once more, and, in 1887, a committee officially announced that the standard showing the bear on all fours — the flag acquired from the Navy Department in 1855 — was the one and only “original” Bear Flag.⁹

Thereafter persons visiting the Society and asking to see the “real” standard were shown this flag, and thus the view that the banner, displaying the bear passant, was the true Bear Flag won general though not universal acceptance. By 1911 this view had achieved such predominance that there was not too much protest when the flag, with the walking bear, was chosen by the state legislature as the basis of the design for the official state flag.

Nevertheless, the old stories that the Pioneers were wrong, and that another standard was the “real” one, have refused to die. In 1942, for instance, a writer, learned in the sources of western history, published an account of the Bear Flag Revolution in which the animal on the settler ensign was described as “standing on its hind legs.”¹⁰ On the centenary of the Bear Flag raising, a descendant of a pioneer who had resided in Napa Valley in 1846 recorded family tradition to the effect that the original standard was made up of red and white stripes, with a blue star and a bear standing erect.¹¹

The letters printed below would appear to provide adequate evidence for laying, once and for always, these divergent and disturbing fables. Perhaps research concerning the Bear Flag Revolt can now be directed to other phases of the problem.

From the history of the controversy, however, such a happy conclusion is scarcely to be expected. One is reminded of the fate of that worthy pioneer,

William Baldrige, when he tilted his lance in the fray back in 1872. "Seeing the contradictory accounts of the history of the Bear Flag," he wrote for the *Napa Register*, "I have been astonished and even vexed that a thing so well known should be a matter of controversy."¹² Thinking that the misapprehensions should be corrected, and being, as he later recalled, "of a simple minded nature," he was "green enough" to publish a "true history" of the settler emblem, "being well assured in my own mind that everybody would take it for granted that it was strictly correct and hence the controversy would come to an end, but much to my astonishment and consternation about a dozen much better writers than myself appeared on the scene and proved that not only myself, but all other writers on the subject except themselves were notorious liars and that they alone had stated the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth on the subject."¹³

JOHN ELLIOTT MONTGOMERY TO MRS. MARY MONTGOMERY
[A. L. S.]¹⁴

U. S. Ship Portsmouth Ancherage Yerba buena Cove
Bay of San Francisco Coast of California Oct. 20^t. '46

My Dear Mother,

It is with great pleasure that I seize upon an opportunity to write you by the Ship Roman of New Bedford Capt Shockley which sails from this coast in a few days for New Bedford¹⁵ but this letter may not reach you until June or July 1847, at which time father hopes the ship will be on her way home. I shall proceed to give you an account of the grand drama that has been acted in California since our anchoring in this Bay on the 1st¹⁶ of June last, to wit: On the 14th of June a revolution broke out on the part of the Americans & other Foreign residents against the Californian government & a party of 34 men surprised & took the interior town & fortress of Sonoma making Gen^l. Don Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo & his brother Don Salvadore Vallejo & Col. Don Victor Prudon all distinguished Mexican army officers prisoners & hoisted a flag of their own manufacture of this fashion. A white field with a red border on the lower edge a Grizzly bear in the center with a star in the upper corner the whole composed of [a] piece of white cotton with a Stripe



Flag of the California Republic

of red Flannel the white colloured with *black berry juice Brick Dust & oil* such was the first standard of liberty ever raised in California. After doing as above stated they chose a Commander W^m B. Ide by name & a Lieut. by the name of Ford & declared the country free & Independent of Mexico; Some days after this a party of 15 Americans under the command of Lieut Ford a relation of the Deacons¹⁷ met a Company of Californians 75 in num-

ber & after a short battle the latter were routed with a loss of 8 [?] ¹⁸ killed & 3 wounded while the Americans lost not a man now this is a problem to solve if 15 Americans will whip 75 Spaniards how many good Yankees would it take to whip all California can produce[,] about 6 or 700 say this was the first battle in which blood was spilt in California. Things went on quietly u[n]till the 7th of July when the Commodore John D. Sloat hoisted the Flag of the U. States in Monterey declaring that war actually existed between [the United States and Mexico;] on the 9th the news reached here & Father at the head of 100 men landed & took formal possession of this Bay hoisting our flag here father was appointed Military Commandant of the Northern Dept. of California comprising an area of 1000 square miles & including five Military posts & his address from the country people is as follows he received a letter tonight petition[ing] for a grant of land directed thus "To His Excellency Jn^o. B. Montgomery Esq^r. Comd^r. in Chief of the U. States Forces and Governor of the Northern Department of California on Board the U. States Ship Portsmouth at San Francisco." Humph! Titles enough I wish some of them would bring money into his pocket the old Commodore was a short time after relieved by Commodore R. F. Stockton in the Congress the new Comd^r. drove the Mexican Government offic[ers] ¹⁹ out of the Country & came up here but [had not] ²⁰ been here long when an insurrection below sent him back again & there he [still] ²¹ is. My time & small room will not allow me to enter more into particulars. The Warren is expected daily to relieve us we to go blockading on the Mexican Coast having lain here for 5 months. I am going to buy 2 square leagues of land here & am trying to persuade father to leave me here to try my luck at farming for quill driving will never make me a fortune but more tomorrow it is 10 P. M. Nov^r. 8th [?] ²² 1846. William ²³ has just arrived in the Warren she is to relieve us in this bay we have been here five months & more & I expect the next time I write it will be to give you an acct. of some battle we have been engaged in. The Cyane has had a battle & knocked down the town of Guaymas Dupont Commands her J Van Ness Phillips ²⁴ Midⁿ is aboard of her I have no more time at present I have just sealed a letter of 17 pages to Mary Mc.Kosky we are all well I never was health[er] in my life everybody says I am growing fat Bill is in good health & has written Larry [?] sends love father is writing a long letter to you this is Julia's ²⁵ birthday isnt she going to be married any thing but an old maid sister but adieu & believe me ever your affectionate son

J. E. MONTGOMERY C. C. U. S. N.

[Addressed] To Mrs. Mary Montgomery No. 6 Washington Street
Charlestown Mass^{ts}. U. States of N. America
per ship Roman Capt. Shockly
[Endorsed] Bay of San Francisco Nov^r. 11th 1846 Sealed

ROBERT BAYLOR SEMPLE²⁶ TO COMMANDER JOHN B. MONTGOMERY
[A. L. S.]²⁷

Dear Sir.

Yerba Buena Nov. 25, 1846

It has been signified to the Committee,²⁸ that you are desirous of keeping the original Flag, first hoisted in the name of the "Republic of California," which is now in your possession for the purpose of depositing it in the National Institute of the United States.

Permit me, sir, on behalf of the Committee, to say that we are highly gratified with the kindness which you have manifested towards us, and your deportment as an officer and a gentleman has attracted our warm admiration, we take a pleasure in acceding to your wish, and here beg leave to say that we are glad to exchange it for the broad stripes and bright stars of our native land.

With the Greatest Respect, your obedient Servant,

R. SEMPLE, Chm. Executive Committee

Capt. John B Montgomery U. S. Sloop of War Portsmouth

COMMANDER JOHN B. MONTGOMERY TO ROBERT BAYLOR SEMPLE
[A. COPY]²⁹

Sir, U. S. Ship Portsmouth San Francisco, Nov^r. 26th 1846

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, written in behalf of the Executive Committee of the late Revolutionary party in California, & returning my thanks to the Committee & to yourself individually as their Chairman for the expression of their kind & friendly sentiments & feelings towards me; & beg leave to state that the revolutionary Flag first hoisted at Sonoma on the 14th June last has never been in my possession, but belongs to my Clerk to whom it was given by one of the original party soon after the substitution of the U. S. Flag at that Post in July last.

I would respectfully remark Sir, that the Committee have been misinformed in relation to my views respecting the future disposition of the Flag, as I have never expressed the desire to present it to the National Institute of the U. States. But I recollect on one occasion when informed that the executive committee intended applying for the restoration of the Flag, that I observed to the present possessor of it, that in such an event he would have to relinquish the Flag to those who alone had the right to dispose of it; and to the best of my recollection, I at the same time remarked, that if it had fallen into my hands, or belonged to me, I should send it to the Honb Secretary of the Navy, on my arrival in the U. S.

With sentiments of respect I am Sir Your ob^t Ser^t.

Signed JNO B. MONTGOMERY Commander

To R. Semple Esq^r. Chairman of Ex Committee of the late
Revolutionary Party in Up. California

California Historical Society Quarterly

COMMANDER JOHN B. MONTGOMERY
TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

[A. L. S.]³⁰

U. S. Ship Portsmouth Boston, May 5^t 1848

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that there remains in my possession three Mexican ensigns taken at the time of hoisting the flag of the U States at San Francisco in upper California, and at San Jose & La Paz in lower California by the Portsmouths crew; and also the original revolutionary, or Bear flag (as it is called) of California, for which the flag of our country (furnished from the Portsmouth) was substituted at Sonoma on the 9^t. of July 1846; the latter falling into my possession in the manner explained in two notes copies of which are herewith enclosed.³¹ The revolutionary flag being much soiled, and composed of cotton cloth, flannel, and black berry juice, probably the only materials possessed by the manufacterors, I have caused another to be made of bunting to accompany it, on which I have taken the liberty to clothe the Bear in his appropriate color, instead of red, as unavoidably represented on the original flag.

Should I receive no directions concerning the dispositions of these flags, they will be left with the Commandant at this station. . . .

With highest respect, I have the Honor to be Sir Your Obt Sert

JN^o. B. MONTGOMERY Commander

To the Honorable Jn^o Y Mason³² Secretary of the Navy Washington

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO COMMANDER JOHN B. MONTGOMERY

[COPY]³³

Commander John B. Montgomery Navy Department, May 10, 1848.
Comdg. U. S. S. Portsmouth, Boston.

Sir: I have received your two letters of the 5th instant. . . .

You will be pleased to deposit with the Commandant of the Navy Yard, the Mexican Ensigns taken at the time of hoisting the flag of the United States at San Francisco, referred to in your letter. . . .

I am respectfully, your obt. Servt.

J. Y. MASON

COMMANDER JOHN B. MONTGOMERY
TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

[A. L. S.]³⁴

U. S. Ship Portsmouth,

Navy Yd Boston May 15^t. 1848

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your three letters of the 9^t. 10^t & 11^t Inst, and to inform you that the 24 Registers for the officers of the

Portsmouth have been received and distributed as far as practicable, and the Four Flags, & Coal, transferred to the Commandant of the Navy Yard at this station as directed. . . .

I have the honor to be Sir Your Obt Servt

J^N° B MONTGOMERY Commander

To The Hon. John Y. Mason Secretary of the Navy Washington

COMMANDANT, BOSTON NAVY YARD,
TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

[A. L. S.]³⁵

Comdts Office, Navy Yard Boston Jan^y 24th 1854

Sir,

I have the Honor to forward to you the Original Bear Flag, under which the Independence of California was first proclaimed — There are two of them, the one made of cotton cloth being the Original — These flaggs were brought to this Yard by the U. S. Ship Portsmouth, on her return from the Pacific, after the Mexican War — as I learn from an officer who was on that station at the time — and must have been mislaid and forgotten for a long time — They will be handed to you by Purser Bradford,³⁶ who is about visiting Washington, on private business.

I have the Honor to be Very Respectfully Your Mo. Ob^t. Ser^t.

F. H. GREGORY Comdt

Hon. J. C. Dobbin³⁷ Secretary of the Navy Washington

[*Endorsed*] Ans Jan^y 30th

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

TO THE COMMANDANT, BOSTON NAVY YARD

[L. S.]³⁸

Navy Department January 30th. 1854

Sir,

By the hands of Purser Bradford I received your letter of the 24th. instant.

I am obliged to you for transmitting the California flags — they are connected with interesting events in the history of the country and will be preserved in the Navy Department until some other disposition shall be made of them by the Executive or Congress.

Very respectfully Y^r. obt. St.

J. C. DOBBIN

Comm^o. F. H. Gregory Commandant Navy Yard Boston, Mass^{ts}

California Historical Society Quarterly

JOHN B. WELLER³⁹ AND WILLIAM M. GWIN⁴⁰
 TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
 [A. L. S.]⁴¹

Senate Chamber 17 Feb 1855

Sir—

We understand that you have in your department two flags raised by the Americans in California early in 1846 which we have been requested by some of our citizens to obtain for the use of the "Pioneer association of California"—If consistent with your views of propriety you can deliver them to us we will take charge of them for the purpose aforesaid

Respectfully Your ob Serts
 JOHN B. WELLER
 W. M. GWIN

Hon Jas C. Dobbin Sec Navy

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
 TO JOHN B. WELLER AND WILLIAM M. GWIN
 [COPY]⁴²

Navy Department February 20th 1855

Hon^{ble} John B. Weller and W^m M. Gwin
 U S Senate
 Gentlemen

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17th instant, in which you state that, you have been requested by some of your citizens to obtain, for the use of the "Pioneer association of California," two flags raised by the Americans in California early in 1846 and which you understand to be in this Department.

The two flags allude[d] to were recently deposited at the Navy Department. Not being strictly the property of this Department or connected particularly with U. S. Naval service, I see no objections to my parting with them under the circumstances to be deposited in the State of California, with whose early history they are so conspicuously associated. They are therefore, at your service, Gentlemen to be disposed of as suggested.

I am respectfully Your obt. Servt.

J. C. DOBBIN

JOHN B. WELLER TO THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
 [A. L. S.]⁴³

San Francisco Cal
 8 Sep 1855

To the "California Pioneers"
 Gentlemen

Previous to leaving Washington City in March last I obtained from the Navy Department two flags which were used in this state at an early date by

the Americans. One is the "grizzly bear flag" which was hoisted by our countrymen at Sonoma in July 1846 immediately after the defeat of De La Torre by Capt Ford and his gallant comrades. These flags although they certainly do not exhibit much artistic skill they are so connected with the early history of American affairs in California that they must be of interest to your association. They will at least serve to keep in remembrance the names of the brave and fearless pioneers who made the first movement towards expelling Mexican power from this territory

I know of no better disposition I can make of them than to commit them to your charge. As relics of the past I doubt not they will be carefully preserved.

Very Respectfully Your obd sevt
JOHN B. WELLER

EXCERPT FROM THE "DONATIONS" BOOK,
SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS⁴⁴

No. 169 Letter and Bear Flags Procured from the military
No. 170 The "Fremont Flag" was presented department at Washington
at the same time
Donated Sept. 8, 1855, by Hon. J. B. Weller

Author's acknowledgment. — The copying of the documents upon which this article is based was made possible by fellowships generously granted to the present writer during his days as a graduate student by the Native Sons of the Golden West and by the Class of 1883, University of California.

J. A. H.

NOTES

1. Josiah Royce to Henry L. Oak, Sept. 17, 1885 (MS, Bancroft Library, Univ. Calif., Berkeley).

2. Warren N. Woodson, "Bear Flag Revolt Started in County," *Corning* [California] *Observer*, June 16, 1933.

3. For some years the present writer has been engaged in preparing a history of the Bear Flag Revolt, with special emphasis upon Frémont's part in the movement. For a summary of his present conclusions, based upon the latest research on the subject, see his "Bear Flag Revolt," in *American Heritage*, n. s., I, no. 3 (Spring 1950), 24-27. It is hoped that a series of hitherto-unpublished documents, throwing light upon Frémont's actions, can be published in this QUARTERLY in the near future.

4. This reference is to the letter written by John E. Montgomery to his mother, Mary Montgomery, dated at Yerba Buena, July 25, 1846, and now in possession of Yale University Library. For calling his attention to this letter, the writer is indebted to Col. Fred B. Rogers, U. S. A. (ret.).

5. Thomas Harrison Montgomery, *A Genealogical History of the Family of Montgomery* (Philadelphia, 1863), p. 112.

6. U. S. S. *Warren*, Log Book, Feb. 16, 1846, to April 30, 1847 (MS, National Archives, Washington, D. C.); John B. Montgomery to Robert F. Stockton, U. S. S. *Portsmouth*, Dec. 7, 1846, Navy Department, Area Files, A-9 (MS, National Archives).

7. *Daily Herald* (San Francisco), Sept. 11, 1855.

8. *The Pioneer* (San Jose), Jan. 26, 1878.

9. Society of California Pioneers, "Report of Committee on History and Biography on Bear Flag, November 30, 1887" (MS, Soc. Calif. Pioneers, San Francisco).

10. Bernard De Voto, *The Year of Decision: 1846* (New York, 1943), p. 225.

11. Henry Fowler Mallett, "The Origin of the Bear Flag" (typescript, Calif. Hist. Soc., San Francisco).

12. *Napa [California] Register*, April 27, 1872.

13. William Baldrige, "The Days of 1846" (MS, Bancroft Library), iii-iv.

14. Navy Department, Area Files, A-9. The first page of this letter contains the marginal notation, not here reproduced, "Love to all." Drawing of flag has been enlarged one diameter.

15. Young Montgomery originally wrote that his letter would be sent "by the Bark Tasso of Boston Capt Libby which sails from this coast in December next for Boston," but he crossed these words out and replaced them with those here printed. Two additional lines of text, crossed out in the original letter at this point, are not here reproduced.

16. The *Portsmouth* actually reached San Francisco Bay on June 3, 1846.

17. For information concerning Henry L. Ford and his New England background, see Fred B. Rogers, "Bear Flag Lieutenant," this QUARTERLY, XXIX (June 1950), 129-31.

18. The figure in the original letter is illegible but most resembles an eight, a number frequently given by the Americans at the time in estimating the number of Californians killed at Olompali. *The Californian* (Monterey), Aug. 15, 1846. In all probability, only one Californian lost his life in this engagement.

19. Letters supplied are obliterated in the manuscript by a seal.

20. Words supplied are obliterated in the manuscript by a seal and by a tear in the paper.

21. Tear in the manuscript.

22. The date is illegible but is most probably the eighth.

23. William Henry Montgomery, eldest son of Commander John B. Montgomery. At this time he was twenty-six years old and held the rank of passed midshipman and acting master, U. S. N. He was serving on the U. S. S. *Warren*, which entered San Francisco Bay and anchored off Sausalito on the afternoon of Nov. 7, 1846.

24. J. V. N. Philip, at this time a midshipman, U. S. N. His name is given as "J. Van Ness Philips" in the *Cyane's* Log Book.

25. Julia Maria Montgomery, eldest daughter of Commander Montgomery, born in 1821.

26. Semple, a native of Kentucky, had been a member of the Bear Flag Party and had been prominent in the early phases of the movement. At the time of writing this letter he was editor of *The Californian*, first newspaper in California. For a biographical sketch, see Zoe Green Radcliffe, "Robert Baylor Semple, Pioneer," this QUARTERLY, VI (June 1927), 130-58.

27. Navy Department, Area Files, A-9.

28. Little is known of the early efforts of the "Bear Men" (as the participants in the Bear Flag Revolt sometimes called themselves) to organize in order to obtain what they considered their due "reward" for their services, and to combat for the rights of the "mass of the people" as against the men of "wealth and affability," whom they saw as having taken away the fruits of their victory at Sonoma. As is shown by the letters here printed, they had organized an "Executive Committee" by Nov. 1846, and it was prob-

ably a continuation of this group, with some changes in personnel, which produced the well-known "Report on the Bear Flag Revolt," dated May 13, 1847, and written by John H. Nash, John Grigsby, and William B. Ide.

29. John B. Montgomery, Letter Book, Sept. 6-Dec. 7, 1846 (MS, National Archives).

30. Navy Department, Commanders' Letters, Jan. to July 1848, No. 155 (MS, National Archives). There is a copy of this letter, dated May 6, 1848, in Navy Department, Area Files, A-9. The material (indicated by dots) omitted from the letter reprinted here contains no reference to the Bear Flag.

31. The two notes referred to are Semple to Montgomery, Nov. 25, 1846, and Montgomery's reply of Nov. 26, both of which are printed here.

32. John Young Mason served as secretary of the navy from March 14, 1844, to March 4, 1845; as attorney-general of the U. S. from March 4, 1845, to Sept. 9, 1846; and again as secretary of the navy from Sept. 9, 1846, to March 4, 1849.

33. Navy Department, Correspondence with Officers, Ships of War, Vol. 41, p. 455 (MS, National Archives).

34. Navy Department, Commanders' Letters, Jan. to July 1848, No. 174 (MS, National Archives).

35. Navy Department, [Letters from] Commandants, Navy Yards, Portsmouth, N. H., Boston, Memphis, and Sacketts Harbour, 1854, No. 41 (MS, National Archives).

36. John O. Bradford, who at this time ranked as a purser, U. S. N. He later became pay director and paymaster-general, U. S. N.

37. James Cochran Dobbin, secretary of the navy from March 7, 1853, to March 6, 1857.

38. Navy Department, Boston Navy Yard, [Letters from the] Secy. Navy, Jan. 1852 to June 30, 1855 (MS, National Archives).

39. John B. Weller, U. S. senator from California, 1851 to 1857. He later served as governor of California, 1858-1860, and, briefly, as minister to Mexico, 1860-1861.

40. William McKendree Gwin, U. S. senator from California, 1850-1861.

41. Navy Department, Miscel. Letters, Feb. 1855, No. 182 (MS, National Archives).

42. Navy Department, General Letter Book No. 52 (MS, National Archives), p. 22.

43. In possession of Society of California Pioneers.

44. Society of California Pioneers, Donations (MS, Soc. Calif. Pioneers), p. 26.